

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

The present inventors have discovered that the solution rheology of  
5 cellulose ethers prepared from cellulose pulp is altered by mercerizing and recovering  
cellulose pulp before preparing the cellulose ethers. For example, the solution viscosity  
of carboxymethyl cellulose (CMC) produced from mercerized and recovered cellulose  
pulp is significantly greater than that produced from non-mercerized cellulose pulp. The  
present invention provides a method of preparing cellulose ethers comprising the steps of  
10 (a) obtaining mercerized and recovered cellulose pulp, and (b) converting the mercerized  
and recovered cellulose pulp into the cellulose ethers. The mercerized cellulose pulp is  
typically substantially free of cellulose III. Mercerized cellulose pulp prepared by this  
method has a greater percentage of crystalline cellulose II and a smaller crystalline area  
than that of non-mercerized cellulose pulp. The present invention also provides a method  
15 of preparing a cellulose floc comprising the steps of (a) obtaining mercerized and  
recovered cellulose pulp, and (b) treating the mercerized pulp to form the cellulose floc.  
Alternatively, the method comprises mercerizing and recovering a cellulose floc.  
Cellulose floc prepared by this method have a greater bulk density than cellulose floc  
prepared from similar non-mercerized cellulose pulp. Furthermore, the bulk density gain  
20 is greater than that expected from the coarseness (weight per unit of fiber length) gain  
from preparing a cellulose floc.